I don't know anything.

I'm not being modest or taking my usual bath in the water of self-loathing. I really don't know anything.

I'm sure some of you would have appreciated this knowledge BEFORE you bought this, but it's hardly a good cover blurb, now is it?

I'm self-taught. I learned as I went. And what I learned was that there are no hard, set "rules" for writing. There is no one pearl of wisdom that will open the door to the universe of writing. Anytime someone tells me what the "rules" are, my eyes roll up in my head and I lose consciousness. So, I can't promise you'll find anything even remotely resembling that here.

Any technical writing technique or theory that I hold to - and I definitely do hold to some vital techniques and theories - I got from a book called Story by Robert McKee. Actually, I picked up a lot from pop-culture osmosis, as I am sure many of you have, but this book put names and labels on it. It organized what I had learned into a formidable and essential text. Story is absolutely essential reading for all professed storytellers and lovers of the craft of storytelling, no matter what medium. It gets you thinking and keeps you on course, and really, what's more important than that?

I learned how to write from two things: practice and reading other people's scripts. I love to read a good script more than I love going to a movie or reading a book or comic. I love reading scripts to movies before they are released so that when I do get to finally see them, I can compare the movie I directed in my head to the movie I am watching.

I do. I love reading scripts, and that's why I put together this book. Not because I'm some pompous pomposity who thinks that he has some universal truth to share with the world, but because I really thought you'd like to read my script as much as I like reading other people's.

The only advice I can give is to write honestly. Don't write what you think people want. All people want is not to be insulted. They want to be entertained. They want to know that the person writing to them has something honest and interesting to say.

If you write something you think people want, you will always fail. Let's say that everyone loves blue this year - blue is all the rage. So you sit down and write something blue. Well, by the time you get your blue out for people to see, people will have moved on to pink and won't

want blue anymore. And now you're stuck with this blue thing that no one wants, including you.

The best thing you can offer the world as a writer is something you'd like to read, something that you would buy. Then, if someone else wants to buy it, too, that's great news for you. It's all gravy after that. But bare minimum, having something you wrote be something you would want to read is really the reason anyone in any medium writes. That's why we made Powers, we wanted to buy the comic.

For those who give one or two shits, these scripts were created in a screenwriting program called Final Draft. I love this program for a number of reasons. My favorite reason is that it remembers all of your character names and locations, which means I haven't had to type the word "Spider-Man" or "Walker" in over two years.

(Kinda answers that "How does he write so many comics?" question, doesn't it?)

But - there is no standard script format used in the comic book industry. People just kind of find their ways around the unique concept of collaboration with artists to tell a story.

My style is referred to in "The Biz" as full script, which means there's a panel-by-panel description of the storytelling with dialogue attached. It's very similar to a movie screenplay, with each word of scene description is picked for maximum impact. I'm brief, but I am to the point.

Other styles include the "Marvel-house style", in which the writer gives the artist a page or two of story description. The artist then interprets the story the way he wants, and the writer comes back and constructs the dialogue to accentuate the art. Alan Moore is famous for writing complicated stream-of-consciousness scripts for artists to approach like cryptographers. Paul Jenkins is known to fill scripts with personal anecdotes to accentuate the kinds of emotions he wants to convey in his scenes. Mark Millar drinks himself into a coma and wakes up three days later to find all of his scripts for the year neatly typed and ready to go.

That last one, of course, is a joke. Millar doesn't do that - Ed Brubaker does.

In the following pages, you will find a number of subtle formatting inconsistencies. As time went along, I altered my style to be more communicative. Also, these scripts were never created to be seen by anyone other than Michael Avon Oeming, which means that as the

book goes on, the scene descriptions become less descriptive. This is due to a couple of factors: 1) my increasing comfort level with Mike as the series continues, and 2) lengthy phone conversations with Mike about subtext and detail that cannot be reproduced in these pages. Well, I'm sure they could be, but I have a lot of DVD's to watch.

I did do layouts for the first three issues of POWERS, but I left them out of this collection. Having been a writer/artist for many years, it is sometimes hard for me to determine where the writing ends and the art begins. It's all storytelling to me. As time went on, though, I realized that this was not only unnecessary but a wee bit insulting to Mike's unique artistic and interpretive abilities.

You will find some interesting changes of names and ideas that didn't make it to the printed page. Part of my process, if it can even be called that, is to rewrite scenes once the art comes in. I do this for every book I write, whether creator-owned or work for hire, in a grand attempt to make the art the focus of the storytelling. I often junk dialogue upon seeing the power of the drawing because everything I wanted to be said is spoken within the art.

I lettered the first three issues of POWERS myself, but I've since left that to the professionals. When I'm not lettering, I do balloon placements. Again, this is on every book I write, whether creator-owned or work for hire, because when a writer relies heavily on the power of dialogue, like I do, the placement of that dialogue is as important as what's being said.

Some of the hardest things storytellers have to accept are that they can't control the environment in which their work is read or their readers' mindsets, so they have to try to control the flow and timing as best they can. This is so important to me and it's probably the thing that drives my editors craziest about me.

This balloon placement and final polish is my favorite part of writing comics. It's so much fun to have a pile of finished art to craft your words around. It's a beautiful feeling to see the work of an artist who is on the same page as you. I imagine it must feel quite similar to a film director and his editor when they have piles of really good footage to put together.

What I am saying is: I'm a picker. I know some of my peers are not. Many of them hand in their scripts and look forward. That's fine ... but I pick. I pick scripts to death, but in doing so I usually find the best one-liners, my best moments. On the flipside, it's also where I make the most typos.

Speaking of typos, I am displaying these pages to you as Mike Oeming originally saw them. I thought it might be a little more interesting that way. I did make a grand attempt to clean them up, but I didn't alter any content. This is why you'll see Walker and some other characters going by different names in the beginning, because I thought you'd enjoy seeing the wart-strewn process.

For the up-and-coming writers out there: if questions about craft and theory still bounce around your brain, visit me and my comic-creator peers at the jinxworld.com messageboard. Feel free to ask any question and discuss it.

Also, for more information, I have a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the JINX graphic novel I did for Image both in the graphic novel itself and on my web site.

I don't have any advice on breaking into the business. If I'd known how, it wouldn't have taken me forever to get in. I do know one thing, though: writers write! They don't sit around wishing they were writing or talking about what they're thinking of writing. They write! Because while you're sitting around and talking about it, someone is out there writing their fucking asses off. Someone is out there kicking your ass and stealing your dream job.

So read this while you're on the toilet, but when you're done, write something.

I will be.

Oh, and for those of you who don't give a shitsky what I think about writing and just wanted to read these scripts, you might want to skip all of this and turn the page.

I'm sure some of you would have appreciated this knowledge BEFORE you read this, but…

BENDIS!